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Commission on Bullying Prevention Hearing

Good afternoon:

I am Denise L. Pagán-Vega, Chief of Federal Programs for the Springfield Public Schools and on behalf of our Superintendent, Dr. Alan J. Ingram, we thank you for the invitation to participate here today and hearing our voices on this very important topic.

We at the Springfield Public Schools have updated our Bullying Prevention/Intervention Policy, created a Safe and Supportive Learning Communities committee in every one of their 44 schools and we are currently implementing our Bullying Prevention and Intervention Implementation Plan.

Our Comments on An Act Relative to Bullying are the following - brief but important:

1. Please consider adding the presence of an imbalance of power between the aggressor and the target to the definition of bullying. If this dynamic doesn't exist, the target wouldn't allow for repeated aggressive behavior.
2. Please offer guidance regarding criminal behavior. If the behaviors are deemed as bullying, the principal/designee is directed to report these to local law enforcement officials if s/he believes these behaviors may be criminal.
3. Please provide uniform culturally and evidenced based best practices for interventions that can be implemented and replicated by school staff, aggressors, targets and by-standers.
4. Please provide an aligned evidence-based instruction for all grades K-12. Most districts are struggling with this.
5. Please consider including pre-K in this mandate.

Thank you!